

Dick Dowling

PUBLIC ART COLLECTION IDENTIFICATION SUMMARY



**Number:** 0019

**Artist:** Teich, Frank (1856 - 1939)

**Title:** Dick Dowling

**Date:** 1905

**Type:** Sculpture

**Medium:** Sculpture: Carrara marble,  
Pedestal and Base: Gray granite

**Dimensions:** Sculpture: approx. 8' x 10' x 10',  
Pedestal and Base: 20' x 10' x 10'

**Foundry/Fabricator:** Artist

**Location/Environment:** Hermann Park  
(triangle near the intersection of Hermann  
Park Loop, located at North MacGregor  
and Holcombe)

**Provenance:** Given to the City of Houston  
by the Dick Dowling Camp No. 197, the  
Hiberians and the Emmett Council

*Historical Background, Physical Description, and Restoration Facts on Page 2*

City of Houston Municipal Art  
[www.houstonmunicipalart.org](http://www.houstonmunicipalart.org)

Dick Dowling

**Historical Background**

**Subject**

On St. Patrick's Day, 1905, a thirty-foot-tall, white marble sculpture of Irish Immigrant Dick Dowling was unveiled in front of City Hall in Market Square. Sculpted by Frank Teich, this was the first civic monument erected in Houston. *Dick Dowling* was commissioned for \$1909.25.

Richard William Dowling was born in 1837 in the town of Tuam, in County Galway, Ireland. In 1857, Dowling moved to Houston, Texas and within a year, married Elizabeth Anne Oldum. He organized Houston's first commercial gas company and his saloon was the first gas-lit establishment in Houston. On July 26, 1858, Dowling became a U. S. citizen.

Dowling had many interests in local enterprises in his years in Houston. He founded an oil company, organized Houston's first streetcar company and was a founding member of Houston's first volunteer fire department, the Houston Hook and Ladder No. 1.

In 1861, Dowling enlisted with the Confederate 1 st Texas Heavy Artillery for Coastal Defense, also known as the Davis Guards. On September 8, 1863, this predominantly Irish group of forty-seven laborers and dock-workers successfully defended Sabine Pass from 5,000 invading Union troops.

Dowling contracted Yellow Fever and died at the age of twenty-nine on September 23, 1867.

**Physical Description**

*Dick Dowling* is a white Carrara marble sculpture (approx. H 8' W 2'6" D 2') mounted on an inscribed, gray granite pedestal and base (H 20' W 10' D 10').

The sculpture depicts a mustached Dick Dowling wearing Confederate military attire, standing with his right leg against a tree-trunk and his left leg in a contraposto position. Dowling's bent proper right(PR) arm is against his chest and holds a pair of binoculars in his proper right hand. His proper left(PL) arm hangs at his side with his proper left hand resting on the hilt of a Confederate sabre.

There is a relief of a cannon on wheels on the top front part of the pedestal, beneath Dowling's feet. There are carvings of Shamrock at each of the top corners above the inscriptions and volute shaped reliefs in the center above the inscriptions on each side of the pedestal. The front of the base is inscribed with the artist's name ( *F. TEICH/ LLANO, TEX.*)

The pedestal is inscribed on all four sides with the names of the soldiers involved with the Battle of Sabine Pass.

**Restoration/Conservation**

*Dick Dowling* was restored in October of 1996.